

House Republican Press Release

March 1, 2006
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Rep. Miller Introduces Legislation to Protect Personal Social Security Information



Measure Would Help Prevent Identity Theft

A measure that would enhance the confidentiality of personal Social Security information and help prevent identity theft has been introduced by state Representative

Lawrence G. Miller, R-122nd District.

The proposal would prohibit individuals and businesses from refusing services to persons who refuse to disclose their Social Security numbers to them, Representative Miller said.

“The first step in an identity theft scam is taken when a criminal obtains your Social Security number – usually from discarded documents or other paperwork or from information you have provided to individuals or companies with whom you do business,” Representative Miller said. “After identity thieves procure valid Social Security numbers, it is relatively simple for them to open or reactivate credit card accounts in your name, apply for federal or state benefits, or make changes to your financial accounts.”

“The most important step you can take to prevent unscrupulous people from gaining access to your Social Security number is to shred or tear up documents containing that information. Just as critical to protecting the confidentiality of your Social Security information is strictly limiting the number of individuals, businesses and organizations who have access to it,” Representative Miller said. “The fewer people who have access to your Social Security number, the safer you are.”

“However, many people who have refused to provide their Social Security numbers to individuals, companies or other entities that have no valid reason for requesting the information have been threatened with denials of service,” Representative Miller said. “It makes it very difficult for people to say no to a demand for their Social Security information when a company responds by refusing to do business with them. My bill would help protect the confidentiality of Social Security numbers by making such threats illegal.”

Representative Miller’s proposal would prohibit anyone from refusing to do business with persons who refuse to disclose their Social Security numbers. Negligent violations would be punishable by \$3,000 fines. Willful violations would be punishable by \$5,000

finer and six months imprisonment. Aggrieved individuals could sue for actual damages or \$5,000, whichever is greater, plus attorney's fees and court costs.